

SOFTWARE REVIEW

VA-CALC(S) by Psion

The spreadsheet type programs (Visi-calc and its clones) are one of the most popular utilities for microcomputers for business and home financial use. A large part of a small businessperson's time is spent processing columns of figures on sales and expenses to determine whether or not he has made (or is projected to make) a profit. Software to take the tedium out of this work can be quite appealing.

VU-CALC is the "official" T/S entry into this field. I should say entries since there are 2 programs marketed under the same name. Both are produced by Psion. The first VU-CALC (I'll call it V1) is written entirely in BASIC. It may be slightly more adaptable since you can vary the size of the numbers that are entered and the size of the displayed portion of the spreadsheet. Only a small portion of the resulting spreadsheet is displayed. The full size of the resulting table varies from 20x20 to 32x32.

The other VU-CALC (V2) is written in machine code and as a result it is much faster handling. It is much easier to enter names, numbers and formulas. Its grid size is a fixed 36 (across) by 26 (down). It can also handle larger number processing formulas.

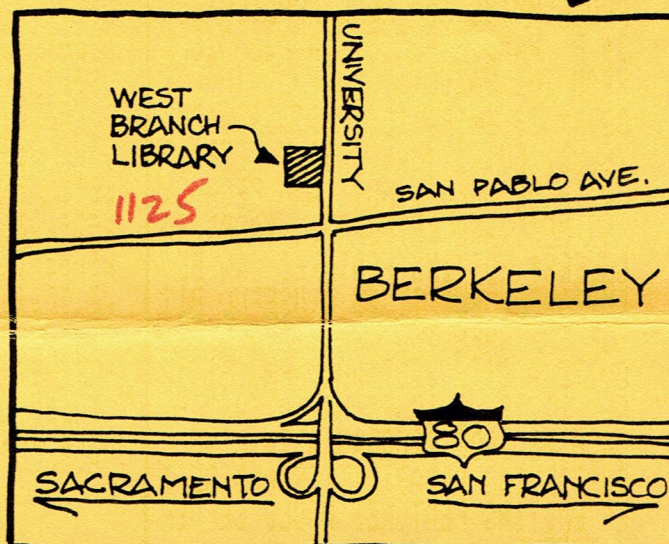
There are packaging differences between the programs I've seen marketed as ZX81 software. I have not seen the T/S VU-CALC so I don't know whether it is V1 or V2 (or V3).

Most of my experience is with V2. To test it I entered the figures for a hypothetical small business. Across the top I entered categories for expenses (e.g. rent, inventory, salaries, etc.), income and cumulated profit or loss. These figures were projected month by month. The power of the program comes in being able to make projections by varying the numbers and formulas. For example, I can ask what will be my break even point if sales will grow by 5% per month. Once my spreadsheet is set up I can change the formula for rate of change in sales and answer this question in seconds. Previously it may have taken hours of calculations to get this answer.

I have never used Visi-calc or any of the Visi-clones. People who've used them have told me that VU-CALC is not as powerful or adaptable. The spreadsheets are not as large and the formulas & commands are limited in comparison. However, I am enthusiastic about VU-CALC(S). It is perfectly adequate for the home and many small businesses. Used properly a small businessperson will be able to afford an IBM PC in no time.

Joel Brody

NEXT MEETING ↗



January 20, 1983 Meeting starts 7:30p
West Branch Berkeley Library

BAZUG 83

READER SURVEY

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: () _____

HARDWARE: TIMEX/SINCLAIR ()
ZX/81 ()
ZX/80 ()
MICRO ACE ()
1K RAM ()
2K RAM ()
4K RAM ()
16K RAM ()
64K RAM ()

OTHER: _____

PRINTER ()

MEMBERSHIP - SUBSCRIPTION SURVEY

- () I AM A MEMBER OF BAZUG
- () I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF BAZUG AND RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER
- () I WOULD ONLY LIKE THE NEWSLETTER AT A LOWER ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP FEE
- () SEND NEWSLETTER ONLY IF FREE
- () PLEASE STOP SENDING NEWSLETTER

PORTIONS OF THIS NEWSLETTER WERE PRINTED ON THE CAI/P40 PRINTER. THANK YOU JACQUES LAUFER FOR ALL THE PAPER YOU LET US WASTE.

ROBOTEK
Computer Systems
TOM KILPATRICK
10545 B SAN PABLO
EL CERRITO, CA 94530
(415) 524-3730

EASY SAVE / AUTO-RUN

SAM SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE US
A LOT MORE DETAILS ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS THAT A LOT OF US HAVE
BEEN EAGERLY AWAITING. LETS GIVE HIM A WARM WELCOME AND SHOW OUR
APPRECIATION FOR TIMEX SUPPORT OF USERS GROUPS.

COMMENTS ON SQ (Syntax Quarterly)

by Woody McPheeters

There was a surprise in my mail last week--the premier issue of SQ. This was apparently a present from the Harvard Group, publishers of Syntax, an informal mimeo style monthly newsletter devoted to the ZX80 and ZX81. It's a big step up for the Group, in both format (glossy magazine) and style (tightly edited and written). I was much impressed with both its "Departments" (intended as regular features) and with the articles, especially with part one of a two part-er written by John Oliger and titled: Build Your Own EPROM Programmer & Centronics Printer Interface". Real praise is green and crinkly according to Heinlein, and I've just subscribed to the SQ.

The first installment of the featured "Department" on "Beginner's BASIC" cleared up a long standing confusion I wasn't even fully conscious of--namely, the difference in meaning of "=" in algebraic equations vs. in LET statements (where it could be better translated as "means" or "now be", etc.) Also extended was my appreciation of the fact that BASIC variables are labels for physical memory addresses which are assigned and kept track of by programming features in the complete BASIC package.

However, back to the article on hardware by John Oliger, which has really refired my interest in the ZX81--the same interest which had really flagged when I found that noone, neither Sinclair nor anyone else, was going to publish a proper hardware manual for the ZX81. I am still willing to badmouth Sinclair for this omission, but that is another story.

He has apparently done, and now clearly presents instructions for doing, many of the important-to-me things I've wanted to do on the ZX81. He not only presents the hardware including etching

layouts and instructions, but also software in BASIC, fully labeled and assembled source code, and checkout procedures. For those who prefer not to etch, he will sell boards for his projects at reasonable prices. (\$18 for motherboard, \$10 for circuit boards). His method of layout and assembly of motherboards is easy and ingenious, and I have never seen it before.

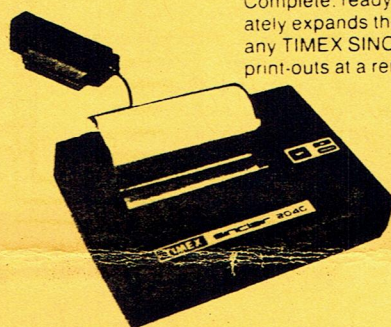
Part one of his two part article covers the printer part, the mother board, a power supply, and an interface which may be built if needed. The software in Part One includes: a BASIC printer driver, an ASCII Conversion and Copy routine, a hex loader, etc. His schematics look fine, his programs are well-documented, and my only criticism to date is that the power supply is short on features and will tend to run the 7805 regulator very hot.

Part Two is promised for the next issue. Meanwhile, I'll write him in the next few days after this meeting.

Mr. Oliger (as well as a software review in same issue) has all good things to say about Sinware Hot-Z from Sinware, Box 323, Dixon, NM 87527. This is a machine language program on cassette for \$19.95 which includes: a disassembler editor (and it will disassemble itself!); a machine language monitor; debugging facilities, and more. It sound like the first software that I'LL buy! Requires 16K minimum, is better with more.

Mr. Oliger also claims that his ZX81 will drive, WITHOUT BUFFER INTERFACE, his three 16K RAM boards, his two EPROM read boards, one printer port, and the EPROM programmer board. This I find hard to believe while wanting to believe believe me! (That is almost poetry...) Apparently the use of pull-up resistors and series resistors in the various line will do more for power than I've thought. Some study here for me, and fun--and saving money too!

Complete, ready-to-use quiet printer immediately expands the use and application of any TIMEX SINCLAIR computer for hard copy print-outs at a remarkably low price.



Available soon!

SOFTWARE REVIEW

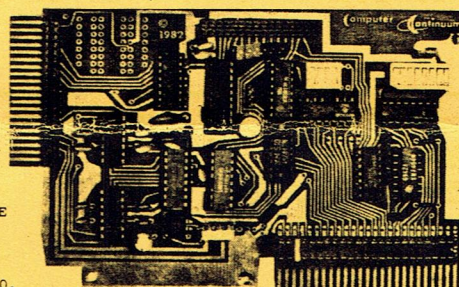
GRIMMS FAIRY TRAILS: TIMEX

While looking for an adventure or simulation program that I hadn't seen before I came across what sounded like a fantasy based adventure program from TIMEX. Grimms Fairy Trails at \$14.87 from KMART seemed to be a fair price. I loaded GFTRAILS at home and was at first disappointed to find instead of an adventure game TIMEX's version of PAC-MAN. The game has six levels of difficulty and plays with a standard maze. If you reach the center of the maze and capture a life-giving crystal you receive one reprieve from being captured. The two fastest speeds are challenging enough to make the game interesting especially for children. (my brothers aged 23 to 31 will agree here.)

new ANALOG INTERFACE BOARD 8 channels A to D + D to A

fast 2.5 μ s A/D CONVERSION TIME. 8 BIT RESOLUTION.

8 CONTINUOUS ANALOG OUTPUTS
0-2.56V (0-5V W/EXT. V_{CC}).
8 ANALOG INPUTS 0-5V.
ADDRESS PICKS CHANNEL.
DIP SWITCHES SELECT MEMORY OR I/O MAPPING AS WELL AS WHICH BLOCK OF ADDRESSES ARE USED.
CAN USE ZX POWER SUPPLY.
UNIQUE DESIGN ALLOWS EASY INTERFACING TO ANY Z80 CPU TYPE MICROCOMPUTER AND OTHERS.
MANY MOUNTING OPTIONS TO ZX81.
FINEST BOARD. NEWEST CHIPS.
KIT \$180. ASSEMBLED & TESTED \$230.

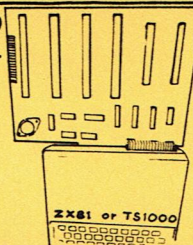


BUFFERED BUS / DEVELOPMENT BOARD KIT \$65. Bare Board \$40 w/CONNECTOR & MANUAL.

UHF Modulator RIDES VIDEO INTERFERENCE. REPLACES VHF MODULATOR. \$15

CONNECTORS FOR 50 WIRE RIBBON. FEMALE TO ZX \$7. MALE TO PERIPHERALS \$7. GOLD PLATED. ELIMINATES VIBRATION PROBLEMS. USE BOTH CONNECTORS TO AVOID ROW INVERSION PROBLEMS.

TERMS: \$3 MINIMUM SHIPPING CHARGE. CAL RES ADD 6.5% TAX. PLEASE SEND STAMP FOR MORE INFO. TO ORDER SEND CHECK OR M.O. OR CALL FOR COD. PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



Computer Continuum
301 16th Ave
San Francisco, CA 94118 (415) 752 6294

COMMENTS ON SQ (Syntax Quarterly)

by Woody McPheeters

There was a surprise in my mail last week---the premier issue of SQ. This was apparently a present from the Harvard Group, publishers of Syntax, an informal mimeo style monthly newsletter devoted to the ZX80 and ZX81. It's a big step up for the Group, in both format (glossy magazine) and style (tightly edited and written). I was much impressed with both its "Departments" (intended as regular features) and with the articles, especially with part one of a two part-er written by John Oliger and titled: Build Your Own EPROM Programmer & Centronics Printer Interface". Real praise is green and crinkly according to Heinlein, and I've just subscribed to the SQ.

The first installment of the featured "Department" on "Beginner's BASIC" cleared up a long standing confusion I wasn't even fully conscious of---namely, the difference in meaning of "=" in algebraic equations vs. in LET statements (where it could be better translated as "means" or "now be", etc.) Also extended was my appreciation of the fact that BASIC variables are labels for physical memory addresses which are assigned and kept track of by programming features in the complete BASIC package.

However, back to the article on hardware by John Oliger, which has really refired my interest in the ZX81---the same interest which had really flagged when I found that noone, neither Sinclair nor anyone else, was going to publish a proper hardware manual for the ZX81. I am still willing to badmouth Sinclair for this omission, but that is another story.

He has apparently done, and now clearly presents instructions for doing, many of the important-to-me things I've wanted to do on the ZX81. He not only presents the hardware including etching

layouts and instructions, but also software in BASIC, fully labeled and assembled source code, and checkout procedure. For those who prefer not to etch, he will sell boards for his projects at reasonable prices. (\$18 for motherboard, \$10 for circuit boards). His method of layout and assembly of motherboards is easy and ingenious, and I have never seen it before.

Part one of his two part article covers the printer part, the mother board, a power supply, and an interface which may be built if needed. The software in Part One includes: a BASIC printer driver, an ASCII Conversion and Copy routine, a hex loader, etc. His schematics look fine, his programs are well-documented, and my only criticism to date is that the power supply is short on features and will tend to run the 7805 regulator very hot.

Part Two is promised for the next issue. Meanwhile, I'll write him in the next few days after this meeting.

Mr. Oliger (as well as a software review in same issue) has all good things to say about Sinware Hot-Z from Sinware, Box 323, Dixon, NM 87527. This is a machine language program on cassette for \$19.95 which includes: a disassembler, editor (and it will disassemble itself!); a machine language monitor; debugging facilities, and more. It sound like the first software that I'LL buy! Requires 16K minimum, is better with more.

Mr. Oliger also claims that his ZX81 will drive, WITHOUT BUFFER INTERFACE, his three 16K RAM boards, his two EPROM read boards, one printer port, and the EPROM programmer board. This I find hard to believe while wanting to believe, believe me! (That is almost poetry...) Apparently the use of pull-up resistors and series resistors in the various lines will do more for power than I've thought. Some study here for me, and fun--and saving money too!

Complete, ready-to-use quiet printer immediately expands the use and application of any TIMEX SINCLAIR computer for hard copy print-outs at a remarkably low price



Available soon!

SOFTWARE REVIEW

GRIMMS FAIRY TRAILS: TIMEX

While looking for an adventure or simulation program that I hadn't seen before I came across what sounded like a fantasy based adventure program from TIMEX. Grimms Fairy Trails at \$14.87 from KMART seemed to be a fair price. I loaded GFTRAILS at home and was at first disappointed to find instead of an adventure game TIMEX's version of PAC-MAN. The game has six levels of difficulty and plays with a standard maze. If you reach the center of the maze and capture a life-giving crystal you receive one reprieve from being captured. The two fastest speeds are challenging enough to make the game interesting especially for children. (my brothers aged 23 to 31 will agree here.)

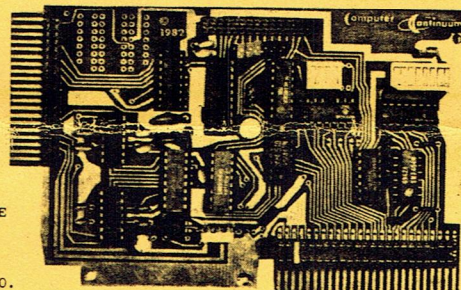
new

ANALOG INTERFACE BOARD

8 channels A to D + D to A

fast 2.5 μ s A/D CONVERSION TIME. 8 BIT RESOLUTION.

8 CONTINUOUS ANALOG OUTPUTS
0-2.56V (0-5V w/EXT. Vcc).
8 ANALOG INPUTS 0-5V.
ADDRESS PICKS CHANNEL.
DIP SWITCHES SELECT MEMORY OR I/O MAPPING AS WELL AS WHICH BLOCK OF ADDRESSES ARE USED.
CAN USE ZX POWER SUPPLY.
UNIQUE DESIGN ALLOWS EASY INTERFACING TO ANY Z80 CPU TYPE MICROCOMPUTER AND OTHERS.
MANY MOUNTING OPTIONS TO ZX81.
FINEST BOARD. NEWEST CHIPS.
KIT \$180. ASSEMBLED & TESTED \$230.



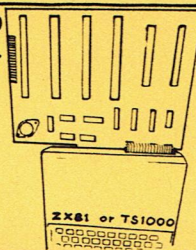
BUFFERED BUS / DEVELOPMENT BOARD

KIT \$65. Bare Board \$40 w/CONNECTOR & MANUAL.

UHF Modulator RIDES VIDEO INTERFERENCE. REPLACES VHF MODULATOR. **\$15**
CONNECTORS FOR 50 WIRE RIBBON. FEMALE TO ZX \$7. MALE TO PERIPHERALS \$7. GOLD PLATED. ELIMINATES VIBRATION PROBLEMS. USE BOTH CONNECTORS TO AVOID ROW INVERSION PROBLEMS.



TERMS \$3 MINIMUM SHIPPING CHARGE. CAL RES ADD 6.5% TAX. PLEASE SEND STAMP FOR MORE INFO. TO ORDER SEND CHECK OR M.O. OR CALL FOR COD. PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



Computer

301 16th Ave
San Francisco, CA 94118

Continuum

(415) 752 6294